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August 14, 2023

Katie Merritt
Director of Policy and Planning
Office of Insurance Commissioner
1326 Strawberry Square
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Director Merritt:

I write today to urge you to add coverage of hearing aids to Pennsylvania's essential health benefits (EHB) package.

Under the Affordable Care Act, individual and small group (50 or fewer employees) health insurance policies must cover the ten categories of EHBs. Each state can select a benchmark plan to describe what specific benefits must be included in each EHB category.

Pennsylvania is behind the times. We have not updated our benchmark plan since 2017. The Insurance Department's reevaluation of Pennsylvania's EHB package shows the department's commitment to ensuring consumers get the care they need, when they need it.

Many Pennsylvanians need hearing aids. These devices promote health that everyone should have access to. That's why Rep. Hanbidge and I will be introducing a bill on this topic in the near future. But the legislative process takes time. And the Insurance Department, by updating Pennsylvania's EHB package, can ensure coverage of these devices in individual and small group policies.

Thus, I urge you to ensure coverage of hearing aids is included in any update to Pennsylvania's EHB package.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe C. Hohenstein".

Joseph C. Hohenstein
PA General Assembly – 177th District